

# Protestants Account

OF HIS

## Orthodox Holding

In Matters of Religion, at this  
present ; In difference in the

CHURCH.

And

For his own and others better confirmation or  
re&#223;ification in the points treated on,

Humbly submitted to the censure of the  
Church of *England*.



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Protestants Account

Orthodox Holding

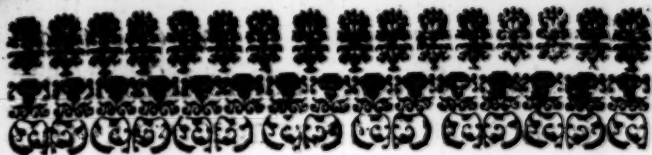
In the matter of holding of the  
Protestant; Indifference in the

CHURCH

And

of the Protestant; Indifference in the  
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*Good Reader,*

**T**H E dissensions in our Church about matters of Religion, being so great, as that there is scarce any thing in practice so well established, but is by some or other called in question, and the distempers of the State being such, as not any man scarcely knows where to make addresse for resolution: I do here (as I hold it my duty) make a publique presentment and submission of the judgement, that upon calling my understanding to an account, I have been able to make in these matters, to the pious censure of our Mother the Church

Church of *England*, to the end that  
from her sincere admonishment,  
both thou and I may receive as the  
case shall require, either approbation  
or rectification in our judgements ;  
which I heartily wishing, rest,

Thine in all faithfull affections,

J. S.



A







## A Protestants Account of his Orthodox holding, in matters of RELIGION.



Hen in all Controversies about matter of Religion, the dictate of the Word of God is principally to be attended; and the certainty of that dictate depends upon the assurance of the true sense and interpretation of the Scripture; It is necessary that in the first place we have consideration of the assurance one may have of the true and genuine sense thereof.

For though without controversy the Scripture be a Rule of the highest, most absolute, and most sacred Authority that may be, and such as wheresoever it extends to give Rule, binds and regulates all humane Laws and Constitutions, from what authority soever derived, and though in many things (as namely, in the Fundamentals of Religion, in matters of necessary faith, and in the expresse Commands of God) the truths thereof are so manifest, and of so assured receipt, as that no authority, no not of an *Angel from Heaven* is to be received to the contrary, but every one must of his own illumination embrace and hold them; yet are there other truths which may so easily admit dispute, as that without the awe of some authorized Moderator, men of perverse affections would inevitably subvert the peace of the Church with their infinite dissensions about them. It is true, that to the great calamities of the Church, there is much dissension made about the Moderator or Interpreter of the Scripture; but that is not so much through error of Judgement, as obstinacy of parties, among whom the two most adverse and dangerous parties are neither of them so blameless, but that they are culpable of detracting from the

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autho-

authority of the Scripture, by authorizing unwarrantable interpretation of it.

It is true, that in the first place the Church of Rome is the great subverter of the Scripture, by assuming to her self the person of the whole Church Catholique, and by vertue thereof, to have infallibility of judgement in interpretation of Scripture; for whilst she as Judge arrogates to her self infallibility, she makes that there is no more regard to be had what the Text is, than there is heed to be taken what was the Warrant that the holy Ghost had for those things which he hath at any time delivered; for he that is infallible, pronounces of his own authority, and can no more depend or be restrained to any originall out of himself, than insinuateneffe can be restrained to a finite thing, or God himself unto a creature: wherefore there can be no extrneall Judge of Scripture, of infallible authority, for that of necessity annulls the Scripture, and makes it no other than a dead Letter.

But in the second place they also destroy the Authority of Scripture, who when in word and outward profession they magnifie it above all things, do then by subjecting it indifferently to the judgement of every one that takes upon him to interpret it, trample under foot the honour that they gave unto it; for as infallibility of the Interpreter takes away the Scripture from the hearer, so incertainty in the Interpreter takes away the hearer from the Scripture: for how can one hear, when he may either doubt the judgement or fidelity of the Interpreter? or when (as it often happens) the Interpreters that are authorized one as much as another, do make a diverse, perhaps an adverse delivery of the Scripture? As in the Romish errour the Scripture is made a dead letter, so in this it is made a Trumpet of incertain sound, which none can with safety hear and receive, unlesse you will suppose some hearer also infallible. To say truth, as in the question whether one God or many, it was truly said, *Dicite plures, dicite nullus*; so in the Interpreters of Gods Word (whereof none can be authentique, but with whom the Spirit of God is warrantably to be presumed) if in equall degree and authority we make many, we make as good as none at all. We must therefore finde an especiall Interpreter, and that of such potiority of judgement before all others, as that we may

may safely confide therein, and yet so confide, as that we may not detract ought from the Authority of the Scripture, by ascribing infallibility to the Interpreter.

We are taught negatively, That *no Propheſie of the Scripture is of private Interpretation*; We are alſo told, That the Church is the *ground and pillar of the truth*; And we are warned not to adhere to the doctrines of particular men, be they never ſo eminent and famous in the Congregation, but to weigh their Doctrines delivered as the Word of God, and to ſee if they have alwayes been ſo underſtood and received by the Church; for if we finde not authority (of our own Church at leaſt) for them, we are then but cautiously to receive them; but if we finde the judgement of the Church Catholique againſt them, we are altogether then to reject them: for when the promiſes of the holy Ghoſts aſſiſtance were made, not to ſingle diſciples, nor to ſome in particular, but indefinitely to the univerſality of them: *I am with you unto the end.* *He that heareth you, heareth me.* *He (the Spirit of Truth) will guide you into all Truth*; that is, not ſome, nor every one of you, but generally the Body of you: We cannot receive Doctrines with any confident aſſurance, but from the concurrent Judgement of all the Paſtors of the whole Church Univerſall, to whom the promiſe of aſſiſtance is properly, and in the firſt place made; or in deſect thereof, from the concurrent Judgement of the Paſtors of our particular Church, which, as to her own Members, is to be received as the Judgement of the whole, till the Judgement of the whole appeareth to the contrary. For as the ſpirits of the particular Prophets in every Church ought to be heard and received of all the Members thereof, untill it appear that their particular ſpirits and Doctrines recede from the concurrent Judgement of all the Prophets of that Church (to which they ought to ſubmit their judgements) ſo ought the concurrent Judgement of all the Prophets of every particular Church, to be received of that Church, untill it appear that it is contrary to the Judgement of the Church Univerſall: But then as the Univerſall Church muſt be heard before the particular, ſo muſt the Univerſality of the particular, before any particulars of that particular Church; for God, ſaith Saint Paul, *is not the author of conſuſion*: And therefore he

2 Pet. 1.

10.

1 Tim. 3.

15.

Matth. 28.

10.

Luk. 10. 1

16.

1oh. 16. 13.

1 Cor. 14.

32, 33.

not onely objects against the retractory particulars of *Corinth*,  
 1 Cor 11. *We* (that is, the Church of *Corinth*) *have no such Customs*; But lest  
 16. they should alleadge errour also in that particular Church, he  
 justifies their practise, by the practise of the Universall; *Neither*  
*(saith he) have the Churches of God.* By which it appears, private  
 men are tyed to submit to the judgement of their particular  
 Church, and that unto the judgement of the Universall.

But if any ask what is the Catholique Church, when and how  
 is her judgement to be had.

The Catholique Church (properly so called) is the whole  
 number of Christians in all places Universally professing Christ;  
 And this, since the Apostles times, never was, nor can be assembled  
 into one, to give sentence upon any thing: But as in the Politique  
 Body of Civill States, the reall assembling of all the Members  
 personally being unnecessary, inconvenient, and almost impossi-  
 ble; some persons representative of the whole, being by intimati-  
 on of the superiours from all parts, delegate to give the common  
 suffrage of the whole, do by the Laws of God and man, give the  
 binding sentence of the whole Body Universall, So in the mysticall  
 Body of the Church, the Ecclesiasticks, which are the onely au-  
 thorized Members, for discerning and judging matters that depend  
 upon the Word of God, because that to them, and to them alone,  
 were the promises of the holy Ghosts assistance made, they (I say)  
 either all assembling themselves together, or at least in their severall  
 Diocesses, chosing and delegating from among themselves trusty  
 men, to do the office of the Clergy in that point, do truly and  
 properly give the entire Vote of the whole Catholique Church:  
 And in this way we have many sentences and Decrees thereof re-  
 maining to us; which being from age to age successively received,  
 do stand in force and speak, unto this very present: against which,  
 whosoever shall in practise or doctrine attempt any thing to the  
 prejudice of what is so established, shall apparantly declare him-  
 self an insolent and schismaticall exalter of himself, and of his  
 own private judgement, against the judgement of the whole Ca-  
 tholique Church: and in the same way that the Church Catho-  
 lique speaketh, in the same also, if need be, speaketh every parti-  
 cular Church.

This being the extraordinary way wherein the Church speaketh not, but upon extraordinary occasions; she hath also for ordinary occasions, a continuall constant voyce in an ordinary way; The Church, considered in it self, is not, nor cannot be lesse than the whole Body of it; but considered in the actions of it, any part by which it duely worketh; as to that work onely which it so intendeth, is truly and properly enough called the Church: If we speak of a man, as of his being, as that he lives, is in health, young, lusty, &c. we mean by the man no lesse than the whole man, with all his members; but if we speak of the particular actions of the man, as that he did hear, see, speak, take, &c. we do not then intend that every distinct member of his body did actually hear, see, speak, take, &c. but that the man performed those actions by the proper members respectively ordained for the doing of them, and that neverthelesse the office of each member so ministring, was the proper act of the whole man; so that though the eyes of the man onely saw, his ears heard, his tongue spake, and his hands handled, yet is the whole man said truly to hear, see, speak, and handle.

As then in the body naturall, so in the Body mysticall, the Church; though the Church, in her being comprehend all members, as well Lay as Clergie, yet in her work and actions she worketh not promiscuously by all, but by her proper and ordained members; for if every one were an eye to see, a head to judge, or a mouth to give sentence, then were they all but one equipotent member, and where then were the body? saith S. Paul: therefore though in the question of circumcising the believing Gentiles, the letters of Ordinance went in the name of the Apostles, Elders, and Brethren; yet plainly the Brethren had no vote in the decision of the question, but as the Apostles and Elders are onely said to have come together to consider of the matter, so the debate and decision there, is onely theirs, and the Decrees thereupon are in the 16 Chapter, called onely the Decrees that were ordained of the Apostles and Elders, and if we will have the Brethren to have been named in the Apostles Letters, to shew that Lay-men have authority to vote in matters of Religion, then must we also confesse that Lay-men, as well as the Man of God, have authority to judge in matters of

1 Cor. 12.

12.

1 Cor. 12.

19.

Acs 15.

23.

Acs 16. 4.

Doctrine also, for they that write the Letters, say of the point of Doctrine, *We gave no such Commandment.* Therefore plainly the judgement of the Apostles and Elders, was in that matter, the judgement of the Brethren, and of the whole Church there, by their unanimous submission and agreement unto them. And when all is done, the voting of Apostles, Elders, and Brethren together, is a thing farre differing from the voting of Lay-men onely, and from Lay-mens choosing of the vices.

In the same manner the voyce of the ordayned Governours and Ministers in every particular Church, in those things that are committed to their Care and Charge, is the voice of the Church it self; and the voyce of that particular Church, not being repugnant to faith, nor the declared judgement of the Catholique Church is, (as to the Members of that Church) the voice of the whole Church Catholique: so that he that refuseth to hear the voice of the Governours of his particular Church, refuseth to hear his particular Church; and not that Church onely, but the whole Church Catholique.

Again, as in the body the most usefull members thereof, the eyes, the ears, the tongue, the hands, the feet would not onely be uselesse, but make a confused deformity, if they were every one annexed immediately to the grosse of the body, and not joynd by the mediation of some noble limb, the eyes, the ears, and tongue, by the head; the hands, by the arms, and the feet, by the legs: so would it be in the Church Catholique, if every particular Member should hold it self immediately to depend on it, and not on the noble and mediating limb of his particular Church; that so by a usefull and decent subordination of the Members under the head. *The Body from whence* (as the Apostle speaks) *by joynts and bands having nourishment and knit together, may increase with the increase of God.*

Coloss. 2.  
19.

These same things doth our Saviour teach, when giving a Rule for governing ones self in private offences betwixt his brother and him, he bids him *Tell it to the Church*: Our Saviour meant not that upon every such occasion the Church Catholique should, or could be convoked, but onely that the offended should complain to the Governours of the Church he lived in, the doing whereof,

Matth. 18.  
17.

is properly to complain to the whole Church, yea to the whole Church Catholique, as appears by our Saviours adding, that if the offender refused to hear the Church, he should be as an *Heathen man*; as much as to say, That if by refusing to hear his particular Church, he refused to hear the whole Church Catholique, he should then be as an *Heathen man*, cut off from the Communion of the whole Church; for it were no just sentence to cut off one from the whole Church, for disobeying the particular, unless that disobedience to the particular, were disobeying of the whole Church.

Every particular Church then hath so farre the authority of the Church Universall, that (as to her own Members) her voyce is the voyce of the Catholique Church, and tyes them all in conscience to submit their judgements to hers, and to yeeld observance to all her Ordinances that are not against the expresse Word of God, nor judgement of the Catholique Church. And even in her Ordinances that minister question, whether they be Orthodox and agreeable to the Word of God or no, her authority is so farre binding, as that even those Ordinances are not to be rejected nor condemned upon the judgement of any of her private Members onely, but either by her own review and censure, by some more generall Nationall Assembly, or (if the consequence require it) by a full and true Generall Assembly of the Church; whose sentence when once it shall be obtained, shall be received, as the most sacred, and most authentique judgement that may be had in that matter, and neereft approaching to the judgement of the holy Ghost; but shall not be received as infallible, as if pronounced by a Judge infallible; for what assistance soever God hath promised to his Church, it is onely such as agrees with the condition of a Church Militant, therefore he hath neither promised it to the single Ministers in every of their Preachings, neither yet so to the Church it self, as that in every of her Consultations and Decrees, she should infallibly produce the sentence of the holy Ghost (for then were the Scripture needlesse, seeing the Church should be able to pronounce infallibly with authority, equall to the very Text, and the Church as to errour in knowledge and understanding should not be Militant, but Triumphant: but every  
judge-



judgement of every Church shall have such a potiority of credit and authority, in respect of the judgement of any part or Member thereof, as that it must not be rejected nor over-ruled by any other judgement, than either her own revisall and censure, Assembly of her proper Judges, a more generall Nationall Assembly, or a full generall Assembly of the Church.

To conclude then, when for avoyding confusion in the Church,  
 1 Cor. 14. *God hath subjected the spirits of the* (particular) Preachers, to the  
 32. concurrent judgement of all the Preachers; for men, under presence of preaching Gods Word, to preach their own private judgements, in detraction from the authority of their Church, and without submitting their opinions to the judgement of their Church; this is so farre from honouring God by magnifying of his Word, as that contrarily it destroyes the authority of the Scripture, by confused and wrong arrogated judgement in interpreting of it, it by sects and schismes subverts the peace of the Church, and contrary to the Admonition that God hath given in that behalf, makes God the author of confusion.

The assurance of our Orthodox profession, depending upon the consideration of these things, cannot but occasion a little further examination of them.

Religion, *a religando ex vi termini* is that, which whatsoever it  
 1 Tim. 3. 2. be, ought to binde the Professor; but of all other *Godlinesse* (which onely is the true Religion) must not have that binding power of hers denied; and therefore will-worship, as repugnant to Religion, is to be rejected. *Ye shall not* (saith Moses to the people when they were to enter into the Land, and be a settled

Deut. 12. 8. Church) *Ye shall not* (saith he) *do as we do this day, every one that which is good in his own eyes.* It is impossible for the Professor which followeth his own judgement or conscience onely, to avoid disobedience and will-worship; for private judgement and conscience, are neither sure nor constant observers of Gods Law, nor can a man alwayes tell whether his judgement, or his affection leads his conscience; but as obedience is that which our Saviour himself learning, sheweth that we all must learn; so the power of

Heb. 5. 8. *Godlinesse* is to constrain obedience. And if there be a question  
 Mala. 2. 7. what we shall obey, the Scripture tells us *the Priests lips should*  
 pre-



preserve knowledge, and we should seek the Law at his mouth. And our Saviour tells his disciples; *He that beareth you, beareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me;* and bids that he that will not bear the Church, be as an Heathen man: And St Paul tells us, *The Church is the pillar and ground of the truth,* and against private singularities and insensibilities in the service of God: he objects, that *their Church had no such custome, neither the Churches of God:* We are also commanded to submit to all manner of Ordinance of man, *for the Lords sake;* And that every soul be subject to the higher power; that he that resisteth the power, resisteth the Ordinance of God, and receiveth to himself damnation. The Scripture is abundant to this purpose, and among many other places, *Gen. 27. 6.* is remarkable: When *Jacob* (or *Israel*) was afraid, in the apparell of his elder brother, to seek his fathers supreme blessing, lest by seeking it in a undue manner, he should, instead of a blessing, get a curse; his mother requires his obedience to her voye; *Israel* obeyed her, and by it obtained the blessing. If this Allegory so much concern us, as that we be the *Israel*, the younger brother that want and seek the blessing, our Saviour our elder brother, in whose clothing we seek it, and God our father that gives it; who is our directing mother, by obeying whose voyce we obtain the blessing, but she that is the wife of our father, the Church of God? By these then, and many other Scriptures, it appears, That in all matters of Religion, wheresoever there is a doubt, and consequently use of judgement, the iudgement of the Church is to be preferred; So Gods Word (which must be observed) directs, so the exigence of things requires, the particular man cannot otherwise avoyd will-worship and singularity, nor the Church of God confusion.

When now there is so great offence taken at divers Ordinances of our Church, what is there in any of them so erroneous or corrupt as to discharge ones conscience from the terror of these Precepts, and from the obedience that they command? Is there any thing in the Ordinances of our Church against the expresse command of God? If there be, Why do not the offended shew it, that they may justify themselves, vindicate Gods Truth, and stop the mouthes of all gain-sayers? But when instead of things

expresse crossing Gods Commandments, they finde no exceptions but what, at the most, are disputable, grounded upon interences and collections, and those not generally received, nor yet all approved by the judgement of any particular Church, but late imaginations of men, of a few, and them private men, whether it be meet in the sight of God, upon such grounds to follow men, or indeed ones own self, rather than God, every one may judge.

And were that granted (which indeed cannot be proved, nor may be granted) that the Ordinances of our Church are superstitious, How yet will that warrant the disobeying of them, to a conscience that is guided onely by the Word of God? For where is superstition by the Word of God forbidden? Or where is it there described? Though then we grant superstition to be the foulest corruption a Christian Church can be depraved with, and neereſt approaching to Idolatry, yet being a corruption discovered by the judgement of the Church, rather than any expresse Word of God, With what warrant can any mans conscience, against Gods expresse command, disobey the Ordinance, for fear of superstition, when concerning it he hath received no command from God? especially, when disobedience being like *the sinnes of Witchcraft and Idolatry*, he commits a sin that is equall to them, and onely to avoid superstition, which is lesse than either. Nay, that is not all, but while he disturbs his duty with false apprehensions of superstition, he with his disobedience, commits the superstition which he fears; for when superstition properly is an over-strict religious insisting upon the doing or not doing of that which in it self is but indifferent; his own scrupulousnesse not to kneel, not to bow, not to stand up, not to be uncovered, not to answer, &c. according to the use of the Church, is not onely disobedience, but very superstition it self, placing Religion in that wherein there is no Religion to be placed, and teaching the conscience more to fear pollution from without, by things externally enjoyned, than to fear it within, from the haughtinesse, stubbornnesse, or self-conceitednesse of the heart, than which, nothing doth sooner defile the actions of a man, and make his Religion vain.

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But, will he say, His conscience cannot be satisfied, but that the Ordinance of the Church in some things, is superstitious, so as he may not submit unto it. We must answer, *Let him use* the liberty of his conscience, but let him withall take heed he use it not for a cloke of maliciousnesse; for if through weaknesse of conscience he takes offence at the Ordinance of the Church, as superstitious, which otherwise he knows himself tyed to reverence and observe, let him, in true humiliation of his soul, behave himself like one afflicted, that laments the breach between the Church and him, let him labor for satisfaction by the help of those whose integrity in that behalf, shall not by any avernesse to the Ordinance, be suspected: let him forbear rayling language on Governours, and contemptuous behaviour towards the Ordinance, that so though he cannot be conformable, he may not yet become refractory, but may be piously embraced of the Church, till in the spirit of meeknesse he be at last restored to his strength: But if he will not do thus, but will contend, hold his own opinion sufficient to oppose against the Judgement of the Church, adde contempt to his non-conformity, seek to possesse others with his opinions, glory in their association, and to wards the Governours of the Church be as one of those that controll the Priest, yea, that controll the whole Priest-hood; that man, in pretending conscience, lyeth unto the holy Ghost; he is not prest with conscience, but a lift up heart, self conceited, and affecting singularity, hath seduced him, and makes him maintain an affected scruple of his own, before the iudgement, yea, and the peace of the whole Church.

Hof. 44.

From these generalls, we come somewhat more particularly to consider that which some affirm, that for remedy of the corruptions of the Church, any Assembly representative of the whole Body of any State, seeing it impliciteily comprehends all Orders, Degrees, and Conditions, that are parts of the State, have full power and authority of doing whatsoever any order or part of the State may do; and that therefore they, as well as the Clergie, may, in that State, determine what form of Ecclesiasticall Government, what discipline, what Ceremonies are most fit for the Church, and most agreeable to the Word of God.

Who knows not but that by the same reason they may as well determine what Doctrines are most agreeable to the Word of God : but we shun captiousnesse, and seek our own and every ones clear satisfaction.

It is true, a Body representative of the whole State, hath the power of the whole State, to do whatsoever the whole Body of the State, if it could be all assembled, could do ; but the whole State, if it were gathered together in one, and the whole Clergie in it, could not by their promiscuous Vote determine of any thing that God hath subjected to the judgement of the Clergie onely. Some argue, That the whole State be Christians, and every true Christian a spirituall man; *The Spirituall man judgeth all things* ; And it is true; but that judgement is onely as to himself, to discern and judge for his own right governance, but not to binde others therewith ; he may exercise such judgement as grace administred, but cannot exercise directive judgement, for that is not to be practised, but by especiall Commission of Authority. It was the ground of *Corah's* fearfull sinne, that because all the *Congregation were holy every one of them, and the Lord among them*, that therefore Levites and Lay-men might offer Incense as well as the Priests : one without lawfull authority may not more meddle with decreeing the suppression of vice, and encouragement of vertue, in a way that belongs onely to the Jurisdiction of another, then might the sonnes of *Seruz* use the authority of Christs Name to casting out of devills ; Therefore particular men must have expresse Warrant, before they can decree any thing. And were it granted that they, if known, might in this life exercise directive judgement in Ecclesiastique affairs, yet being so small a number, in respect of worldlings, and it being impossible in this world to distinguish them, or to avoyd ; but that while they vote together with worldlings, their votes will be overruled by worldlings : for these causes, the being inwardly a spirituall man, can nothing more avail him in that point, than if he were not so.

And for this last cause, it nothing also avails, though the Clergie themselves actually vote amongst seculars ; for where the

the carriage of matters cannot certainly follow the votes of the Clergie, but be subject to the votes of the Seculars, their votes so given, cannot have the authority of Ecclesiastique votes, but of Lay. And both for the peace of private consciences, and also for the peace of the Church, it would advisedly be examined whether the votes of Clergy-men chosen by the Seculars (say by the Body representative of a whole State) be of more authority for deciding matters of Religion in question, than the votes of the Seculars themselves that chose them be; for when by the expresse Word of God, *The spirits of the Prophets, are to be subject to the* 1 Cor. 14. *Prophets*, the Prophets must either all of them together hear and determine, or all of them freely make choice of such of their Brethren as shall do it for them, lest if the secular power assume the choice of the men, they, by assuming the choice of those that shall give the Clergies vote, assume the giving of their vote, and upon the matter reject the vote and judgement of the Clergie: for the few men that so be chosen, have no authority of themselves, to judge by themselves, but have the authority of those onely that made the fiduciary commitment of power to them; and it they that committed the authority be Seculars, then is the judgement and executing of the spirit, of Seculars only. And it would further be taken into consideration, Whether, as the Bishop of Rome usurpation of the authority of the universall Church manifested him to be the great spirit of Antichrist, so in every particular Church, any usurping or undue assuming of the authority thereof, will not amount to an inferiour exercise of the same spirit?

Now whereas it is conceived that Forms of Government Ecclesiastique are not tyed to the Judgement of the Clergie, but are arbitrary as the State shall judge expedient, it is not denyed but that Church-Government may be accommodate to the occasions of the State; but then those cautions are to be observed, (1) That as the State is Judge what form of Church-Government will be most commodious for the well-fare thereof; so the Clergie be Judges, whether the form desired be safe for the Church, and agreeable to the Word of God; otherwise the one may be oppressed, while the other is accommodate: Therefore we see that upon every

Numb. 4. every change and remove of the Camp, not onely the taking down  
 15. and folding up of the Tabernacle, and all things belonging to it, was committed to the Priests, but even the utmost act of carrying of it, when all was disposed and ordered by the Priests, was given in charge to those onely that were Levites : And whereunto  
 1 Cor 12. are *helps in Government* reckoned among *Apostles, Prophets, Teachers,*  
 28. and other Members which *Christ hath set in his Church*, if the Government of the Church be to be managed by those that are not to be numbred among them. And if among Pastors which *God hath set in his Church*, he hath ordained some to be *helps in Government*, how dangerous a matter will it be for those that are not of their calling, to iustifie them out of their authority, and in that point usurp their Function ? *Moses* hath long since put terrour in the case, when with a Propheticall spirit praying for *Levi*, he saith, *Smite thorow the loyns of them that rise up against him* : And the Prophet likewise, where speaking of the Church, he saith, *No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that crieth against thee in Judgement, thou shalt condemn* : And our Saviour himself, where he saith to his Apostles, *What ye binde on earth, shall be bound in Heaven.*

Deut. 33.  
 11.

Isa. 54. 17.

Tit. 2. 15.

1 Tim. 4.

12.

Tit. 1. 5.

1 Tim. 5.

19

1 Tim. 1. 3

Tit. 1. 11.

Tit. 1. 5.

Another Caution to be observed, is, That in accommodating Church-Government to the frame and occasion of the State, nothing be disestablished or unseled, that seems to have been seled by any authority of the Scripture. Therefore whereas we see there, the Government of the Church first seled, in the hands of Bishops (that is, of Pastors that had authority over Pastors, *To rebuke with all authority* : Not to suffer themselves to be despised : *a To ordain Elders* : *b To receive accusation against them* : *c To charge some to preach no other Doctrine* : *d To stop the mouths of unruly deceivers* : *e To set in order things that are wanting, &c.*) And we finde not any other form of Church-Government neither in the Scripture, nor in the practice of the Universall Church, as well where the Pope never ruled, as where he did ; that therefore men make not such an accommodating as by an entire rejecting of the Ordinance set on foot by the Apostles themselves, so appearing in the Scripture, and Universally so followed by the Church, they reject both the Judgement of the Universall

fall Church, and also of the Spirit of God revealed in the Scripture.

For as in the change of the Sabbath from the Saturday to the Lords Day, the Church hath clearly shown that she had power to make such a change ; but that change being once made for important causes, the like whereof hereafter can never happen, that power of hers once lawfully used, can never lawfully come to be used again, because there can no more such ground and cause to do it, come again to passe ; So it is likewise in point of Episcopall Government ; though the whole form and frame of it is not so expressly prescribed, but that the Church may, in many things, have power of making therein accommodations to the times and exigence of State ; yet may not those acts of accommodation amount to such a height, as to subvert or abolish the Government which by the iudgement of her Members then infallible was set on foot, because no judgement of her present Members now, can come in any competition with her first : And if any State shall so accommodate it self, the accommodators may, perhaps, be found fighters against the Spirit of God, manifested both in the Scripture, and in the Judgement and practice of the Universall Church of God.

One further particular depending upon these points, and necessary for every one to have his conscience clear and well assured, is the lawfulness of the Liturgie of our Church, concerning which, these considerations present themselves.

The Church being freed from the tyranny of the Heathen persecutors, and settled in peace, it was necessary that God (*that had done so great things for her*) should be honored, not onely by the private devotion of her single Members, but also with the public service of her greatest Congregation ; And seeing that in the Church *Jerusalem* (ever since Christianity) becoming inhabited without walls, occasions the making of as many places of Worship, as there are places of severall cohabitation ; it was necessary, both for observing decency and order, for avoiding confusion ; and for shewing (by as much unity of way as might be) the unanimity, and true communion of the Churches members ; that throughout all her severall Congregations (at least, all of one Nation)



tion) one Form of Divine Service should universally be observed. Hence have the Western Churches (where Religion flourished most and longest) received much what one Form perhaps not all at once, nor alwayes the very same, but with some addition or change; as use and experience gave occasion, untill the Church of *Rome* (corrupting with her greatnesse) suffered not the service of God to be exempt from her corruptions; and growing at length solicitious in them, as even to subvert the Fundamentalls of Religion; It pleased God in divers parts, so farre to enlighten and strengthen his Church, as to examine the *Romane* alterations by the *Test* of Gods Word, which the Church of *England* having more happily than others performed, reiected what was repugnant to Gods Word, and wisely retaining the rest, left us that Form of Divine Service, that unto this day, by the Laws of this Kingdome, is advisedly confirmed in the Church.

In this our restored Liturgie, the long practised judgement of the Church (regarding one way the property of devotion, and another the infirmity of man) thought it fitting not to have prayers, preaching, and thanksgiving alone, without the publique reading also of the very Word of God; neither thought they it fit that the Confessions of sins, Supplications and Thanksgivings that publicly were to be made, should all at once in one continued exercise be performed, lest happily in many, devotion wanting matter of present excitation, should wax cold, and then the intention of the minde growing remisse, and the thoughts wandring, men in spight of their hearts should with their lips onely, perform an empty mock-God service.

To the end therefore that the whole service of the Congregation should be truly publicly performed with true communion, and likewise with true and lively fervour of spirit, they ordained such change and succession of all duties belonging to Gods service, as might best make those severall duties most effectually to the performers.

First therefore, That the Congregation observing one and the same demeanour thorowout all her Members, should upon their knees, with loud voyces, and articular Confessions, make an humble and publike and acknowledgement of their sins, and vile  
con-



dition, and beseech God for mercy and forgiveness; and the Minister, for the comfort of the penitent, to pronounce Gods promise to forgive, and to pray for them, and with them.

That after their humiliation they should with Hymnes of mutuall exhortation taken out of Scripture, stirre up one another to proceed to praise, to singing and rejoycing before God.

Then some portions of the Scripture should be read in course, of which, the Psalms should ever be part, which because they contain matter so abundantly usefull for instruction, for meditation, for comfort, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, they should therefore be read alternally betwixt the Minister and the Congregation, to make them in publique more fervent in the prayers and praises wherewith the Psalms abound, and to make them also more perfect in the Contents of them for their private use; then as Gods works (especially of man Redemption) *are so done as that they ought to be had in remembrance*, so on Sundayes, and other dayes of especiall Commemoration of them, such portions of Scripture as tended most to the setting forth of Gods work on that day annually commemorated, should be read; at the end of which, the Congregation (as moved by the impressions which these portions ought to make in every one) to render God that praise, that glory and blessing which the sense of his mercy in his work then declared, doth justly procure from the heart and mouth of the thankfull hearer; and this they do in Hymnes either taken out of Scripture, or composed and allowed by the ancient and generall approbation of the Church.

After the Lessons of Scripture and Hymnes ended, the Congregation to stand up, and make a publique confession of their faith, and then prostrate on their knees in prayers fitted to the divers necessities and infirmities of humane nature, to make supplications for all sorts, degrees, and conditions of men; in which the Minister should not alwayes himself alone utter the words of prayer, but (for the better entertainment and incitement of devotion) every Member of the Congregation, with frequent interjessing of their Votes and Invocations, should like more active parties in Gods service make a more frequent and effectnall joynt importing of him.

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Then

Then (after an especial prayer for grace and sanctification) the two Tables of Commandments to be read, which summarily containing our whole duty both to God and man, the Congregation conscious of the breach of every one of them, should at the reading of each Commandment, cry out for mercy for their breaking of it, and implore grace for the better observing of it in future: And that done, some choice portions of Scripture of especial comfort and instruction, and more especially relating to the work of Redemption that day commemorated, taken out of the Epistles of the Apostles, and the Gospel of the Evangelists to be read, with which (unlesse the Communion be administered, the Word preached, or an Homily read) the publique service of the Church to be concluded with certain prayers, and with the Ministers blessing of the people.

How well this Ordinance provides for offering unto God the reasonable service of man, we must leave unto the consciences of every man. As for the exceptions that are made against it, they are chiefly these: First, in general, That it is popish superstitious, Antichristian, (a charge which is very foul, if true) then in particular, That it is in a set Form.

Now first to be popish, is no more than to partake of the Manners, Customes, or Ordinances of the Popes, which when in plain terms it is not forbidden in the Scripture, we must seek how it comes to passe, that to partake of them must be unlawfull.

The Popes (briefly) were the Bishops of *Rome*, of which the formost having both for life and doctrine been glorious members of the Church, that Church grew so renowned, as that for judgement in matters of Religion, they had the priority of repute; were to the Western Church the authors of many good Ordinances in Religion, and the great support thereof; till abusing their repute, and by little and little degenerating, they grew into so unspeakable corruptions, as no intelligent man may partake in those things with them, without a conscious committing of manifest sin against the Word of God.

Now though their corruptions are by all means to be rejected, yet are they not therefore corrupt, or to be rejected because they were

were the acts of Popes, but because they were things which the Popes acted contrary to the Word of God; so as repugnancy to Gods Word being the true and onely ground of their unlawfulness, we can reckon them no further unlawfull than that ground or reason will demonstrate: and we may no more for respect of persons (be they Popes or whatsoever) call *good evil*, or *evil good*, Ils. 5. 20. then we may for respect of persons break the Commandments of God; Nor is it more to be abhorred as a popish corruption to use the Ordinances of Popes, which are not wicked Ordinances in themselves, than blessing the people of in the words wherewith *Balaam* blessed them, is to be abhorred as a *Balaamish* corruption; for when by the names of Popish, Jewish, Heathenish, &c. we condemn any thing, we all intend that the thing condemned is of the nature of those things wherein they were especially corrupt, and not of the nature of their doings, which were neither good nor evil, and much lesse of the nature of those wherein they excelled; So as to be popish simply being no argument of necessary faultinesse, we must see whether our Liturgie partakes of any popish corruption or no.

To come readily to the matter, when in all the whole Frame of our Liturgie there is no Worship nor Innovation, but of the true God onely; neither is he worshipped any other way, than by the sole and immediate mediation of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, there first can be no Idolatrous corruption in the Liturgie.

Secondly, It cannot be Antichristian, because that contrary to the proper work of Antichrist (which is to *deny the Son and the Father*, and as God in the Temple of God, *so exalts himself above all that is called God*) the Liturgie shewour the whole course thereof, makes an exact acknowledgements, adoration, and exaltation above all things whatsoever; and as it acknowledges them in profession, so there is not any thing in it, whereby they are denied in practice; So as to call it Antichristian is a malicious slander against the clear truth examined by the Light and Rule of Gods Word. 1 Ioh 2. 22. 2 Thessal. 2. 4.

Lastly, It cannot be superstitious neither; for howsoever in the performance of it there may be some few Ceremonies brought in,

which rightly weighed, do perhaps conduce more to worldly solemnity and ostentation in Religion, than to true and necessary religious decency and reverence, and therefore would be laid down, yet being things otherwise indifferent, introduced for decency onely, and not pressed as things of any other necessary, they can (at the worst) be but errors of Judgement, mistaking what is decent and orderly, they cannot be superstitious, seeing they are  
 1 Cor. 14. not made matters of Religion, but of decency and order, without  
 40. which, nothing ought to be done.

When then, according to true understanding and intention, nothing is meant popish, but what partakes of the superstitious corruptions of the Popes, the Liturgy of the English Church must needs be acquit and discharged, not onely of the infamous calumny of being Idolatrous, Antichristian, and suspicious, but even also of that malicious aspersion of popish; And then it will follow, That the censures of those sinners against their own souls, who in and for these things do falsely judge, censure, and condemn their Mother Church, and renounce obedience to her, and communion with her, because, as they suppose, she is popish, superstitious, idolatrous, Antichristian; their unjust censures (I say) will prove the condemnation of themselves, both of uncharitableness, of self-conceit, and of insolent exalting themselves against the Church of God at least, if not of Antichristian persecution of it also; and the more for this, That while they promise liberty and freedome from superstition, they themselves become slaves unto superstition, making a matter of Religion not to obey the Ordinance of their Church in things indifferent, and where the Word of God doth not forbid obedience, but command it. This briefly touching the generall exceptions, Popish, Superstitious, Idolatrous, Antichristian.

As for the particular exception, That in our Liturgy all prayer, praise, and thanksgiving is in a set Form, a device of mans, not the command of God; a muzzling of the Ministers spirit, a nurse of idleness, and means of neglecting the gifts and graces of God, &c. We must consider, 1. That there is not any expresse Scripture against set Forms of prayer, and therefore the use of it is not against any expresse command of God.

2. All Christian Churches thorowout the world, as well the *Greek and Eastern* (where Popery never raigned) as these our *Western Churches* when once they attained a settled Government, have in all ages served God in set Forms of Divine Service; yea, even the reformed Churches beyond Sea use some set Forms. And for our set Liturgy, if any man list to be contentious against it, we can truly say, It is *the Customs of our Church*, and also of *the Churches of God*; and then the depravers of it will prove to be despisers of Authority, and advancers of their own private judgement against the Universall Judgement of the Church Catholique.

3 Under the Law there were set Forms of publike Confessions, Thanksgivings, Blessings, &c. which being no part of the Ceremoniall, is warrant enough for Christians to use the like.

4. The Psalms of *David* (which as they abound with all those necessary parts of Gods publike service, confession of sins, prayers, Praise and Thanksgiving, so especially with Prayer) many of them having that Title (*A Prayer*) they were not onely used publicly by both the Jewes Church and the Christians, but were penned to that end, and dedicated to the Priests that had the Office of praising God, and were most excellent in those kindes of Musick to which they were set, and the most excellent passages of praise and prayer in them had the word *Selah* added to them, to the end that in the publike use of them, those passages might be iterated, and said or sung over again. Also our Saviour himself having given us one Form of set Prayer (which he bids, *When ye pray, Say*) and not at all forbidden the use of set Forms, makes it out of question, that to pray in a given Form is lawfull (so the Form be good) And what doubt we but when *John Baptist* taught his Disciples to pray, he did it by giving them some Form, which our Saviours Apostles liking, desired to have the like from him, and our Saviour (we see) did not so much give them Precepts and Rules, instructing them how to make prayers of their own (though his Prayer hath that office too) but gave them a perfect prayer in an exact conceived Form, how much

should men fear that their conscience (offended at the use of set prayer, without the Light of Gods Word declaring it to be unlawfull) are consciences blinded with superstition, afraid where no fear is, and their consciences not onely darkened, but their hearts also seduced with self-conceit and singularity, unto perverse and affected contention with the Church.

5. While they pretend to be free Ministers from a supposed restraint put upon their spirits by the use of set Forms, they lay a reall restraint upon the spirits of all Congregations; who being always perfect in the Contents and use of their set prayers, do with prepared hearts and spirits attend the publike and joynt presenting of their known supplications to God for those mercies and graces which the Church, by those Forms, declares all men to stand in need of, and every ones particular spirit attesterh to be necessary for him: But if all Congregations (which God forbid) should be deprived of the use of them, every man shall go to Church bound in the spirit, and know not what supplications he shall make to God, till the mouth of the Minister shall declare it, and then the single Minister (whatsoever his gifts or faculties be) shall determine of the devotion of the whole Congregation, and conclude them all, that they shall make no publike Invocation of God, neither for matter nor form, otherwise than as his spirit, and perhaps sudden conceit, shall minister unto him.

6. When all the Service of the Church shall stand onely upon the strength and gifts of the Preachers, and they differing in gifts one from another, it will inevitably follow, That those of the best gifts will more draw disciples after them than ever, and men will become followers of men, when they shall have no other means of publike communion with God, either to hear him, or to speak unto him, than onely by the gifts of the Preacher, and so the Church shall, against Gods Word, be necessarily drawn into Sectarism and Division.

7. Lastly, If we change our set Forms of Divine Worship into the various and arbitrary service that is to be performed by the Minister onely, among many evils (not now to be foreseen) there is to be feared, that when men shall have known no other publike exercise of Religion, than by the Preachers arbitrary administration,

on, and that he be generally beheld, as the onely Minister of the spirit, of publike service and prayer, the consciences of men thenceforth subdued to an awfull dependance on him, shall finde the Ministers (like the Jesuites) through the Sovereignty they hold in matters of Religion, to exercise an externall dominion over their fortunes also, and set on foot a more dangerous tyranny in Religion, than hitherto the Church hath ever known. And if their opposition to set Forms of publike Service, and to what is used in the Church of *Rome* shall proceed so far, as to reject the publike reading of the Scripture (eight severall Lessons or portions of which are now, by Gods mercifull providence, dayly, or at least every Sunday and holy-day, publikely read in the Church) then shall our Church of *England*, by an ill-guided meaning to oppose the Church of *Rome*, come to imitate her, and towards her children commit the same cruelty that we justly condemn the Church of *Rome* for using towards hers; who though she suffer her Lay-icks to hear the Word preached, yet suffers them not to hear in their own Tongue the powerfull Word of God read unto them; and we, as well as the Romanists, shall (toward those that cannot, or are carelesse to reade) even wholly take away the means which our pious Mother the Church hath ordained for their conversion. And whereas such publike reading of Gods lively and powerfull Word is no mean degree of Preaching, we shall, in an important part, suppress the Word of God, and through disuse of frequent hearing, breed a generall unacquaintednesse with the Precepts and Stories of the Scripture, which will in time hinder both the understanding and applying of that which shall be preached.

Two in the Psalmes, two in the old Testament, two in the new, and two out of the Epistles and Gospels.

We need not further seek to give particular answer to every quarrell that is now made against severall parts and passages of our Liturgy. But when kneeling at the receipt of the Sacrament is so agreeable to the religious performance of that Duty, and yet is quarrelled with, we cannot in silence pass it over: For when want of due preparation is dangerous, yet is not performed without humiliation, contrition, abhorring ones self, forgiving others, turning to them in all charitable affections, thirsting for grace, and fervent invocation of the Divine Majesty for them; how



how can we perform these rightly, without the lowliest prostration of soul and body that one can solicit God withall? Will we say, It should be done before, but not at our receiving? It is true, it ought to be begun before, but he that can so approve of his preparation before, as to cease and say, I have done enough, he is rather to fear his presumption, than to rest in such preparation, he perhaps makes a popish *opus operatum*, of his preparation, and cries peace, before there is peace; nor can he say kneeling is an unfit posture to receive that grace in, which is fittest to be begged on our knees. Will we say kneeling is Idolatry to the Bread and Wine? We must then shew that it is commanded to be done to the Bread and Wine, or intended so, or at least, by Protestants abused so, if none of those be, but it be commanded only as the proper expression of the reverence and humiliation belonging to the duty, then is the exception not onely without cause, but slanderous and malicious. Will we say, That in the Institution of it, our Saviour made not the disciples kneel; True, but let us also confesse that the disciples had the *Bride-groom with them*; who, though he were their Lord, yet called them friends, and admitted them to a liberty suitable. We will not (I am sure) say the Sacrament is now to be celebrated in all things as it was then, and no other wise; and if in any thing there be liberty of receding from what was done at first, whose judgement shall we trust what we must hold, and what we may recede from, if not the Judgement and Practice of the Universall Church from the first to this present? And if indeed we would observe the first Institution, Why spurn we at receiving it together at the Table, for so the disciples did? And Saint Paul calls it *the partaking of the Table of the Lord*; and David, *The preparing of a Table for us*: Truly the receiving every one, or every family apart by themselves in their seats, suits not with observing of Communion, nor coming together to eat, nor eating together into one Body, but favours of singularity and inconformableness to the observance of a true Eucharist.

1 Cor. 10.

22.

Psal. 23.

It is not to be expected we should here examine all the dissentions in Religion that are among us. But seeing that in generall they are the quarrells of particular men for exercise of Religion,



in wayes either besides, or contrary to the established Ordinances and usage of our Church (in which yet they can neither charge the Church, with violating the Word of God, nor shew by the judgement of the Church Catholike, that their own exercise of Religion is that which by the Word of God, is only to be taught and practised;) It will not be unnecessary, to represent to further search and consideration, how much some passages of Gods Word (too little examined by us) are pertinent to the decision of these matters.

For, Whereas true Christianity is a perfect Catholicisme, and contrarily Antichristianisme, or fighting against God, walks in singularities, partialities, sects, separations, and the like. It is too apparant, that the wayes wherein men now pretend, that the true exercise of Religion lyeth, do very much hold the byasse of Sectarisme; who sees it not in our extraordinary running after choice and affected Teachers? In which, though the shew of godlinesse so awes our judgements, that we distrust no error in it; yet does it concern us to take heed of a deceiveablenesse of unrighteousnesse in it. To love, desire, and seek, the lively delivery of Gods Word, is good, and our duty, and so is it also to love, and honour the Preacher for the Words sake. But there is great danger in the comparing, preferring, and despising of one, in respect of another; For while we assume the judgement, and choice of our Teachers, and hear, and follow them according as we like their Doctrine, and no otherwise: We under the shew of godly longing after Gods Word, and honouring the choice Preachers of it, discover an hidden exaltation of our selves, and of our own mindes, and judgements, both above the Preachers, and the Word they preach.

On the other side toward the Ordinance of the Church, and our proper Ministers, we do not only unduely exalt our selves, but adde unto it disobedience; yea, even a faulting of Gods providence, we make our own *Jordans*, too shallow brooks to cleanse our Leprosies. Our *Siloams* that are sent; too unclean pooles to help our blindness: Yea, and we refuse the waters of *Shiloah* for no other reason, then that, they runne softly; We choose our selves streams to our liking, which like the Rivers of *Damascus*

10. 9. 7.  
Isa. 8. 5.

1 Cor. I.  
II.

must be better waters, and of more approved depth and current. Every one must follow his *Paul*, his *Apolla*, his *Cepha*, his *Christ*.

And as our selves encline to these wayes, so have we Teachers that cherish that inclination in us, and finde it no small advantage to them, that by applying themselves to the present affectations of men, they can so draw Disciples after them. For the effecting of which, Though the *weak in faith*, ought not to be received to doubtful disputations; yet they, making no difference between strong and weak, School and Pulpit, Governours and private Men, do unto their vulgar Auditories (who, they know have neither capacity to judge, nor authority to reform) frequently preach their own apprehensions concerning the Government of the Church, and the right exercise of Religion, not only in things apparent, and agreed on, but even in things which they themselves have lately questioned, and drawn in doubt, whether they be right or no. By which means, private presumption, insolence, self-conceit, disdain, uncharitableness, and disobedience (sins most incompatible with true Religion) are grown so great and generall, as that they are become like an Epidemick contagion, putting all men in a maze, what shall be the end and consequence of them. Of which when we cannot have a greater admonition, then where the Spirit of God sets forth the last and perilous times of the Church; It is not amisse to summe up into one entire view, what it is, that the Holy Ghost doth there admonish us of.

Our Saviour himself first warnes the Church, *to beware of false prophets, that come (saith he) in sheeps clothing, but inwardly are ravening Wolves.* Whom that we may know he gives a rule, *Ye shall know them by their fruits, and in another place, by their works:* Where we must note, the fruits and works, are to be taken, as they are in themselves, and as they are naturally taken notice of in all mens understandings; otherwise we make our Saviour teach, *ignotum per ignotum.* It is true, that in every fruit and work that is good in it self, if an evill circumstance, or way, or end, accompany it, the fruit that was good in it self, may by way, or end, be made evill, as if mercy, charity, zeal, &c. be shewed for ostentation, or for a cloak of pretence, &c. But in evill fruits, and works, it is other wise, for no end, or circumstance whatsoever, can make that

that work good, that is evill in it self, as disobedience, sedition, treason, &c. For God *having no need of a wicked man*, and forbidding us, *Thou shalt not do evil, that good may come thereon*, he takes from evill works all the help that their good end, or circumstances may do them. When therefore we finde a deed, that in it self is evill, we must not make that good, for the good end, or good intent of the doer; but contrarily, we must make him a misdoer, notwithstanding the good end and intent of the action. Our Saviour further reveals, That *many shall come in his name, and shall deceive many*; the manner of whose coming, he intimates to be by way of secret insinuation *here in the Chamber*, or by way of separation *there in the Wildernesse*.

In the *Acts* of the Apostles, Saint Paul gives warning of the A.C. 29. 30 like false Teachers, and tells the Pastours of the Church, *Of your own selves shall men arise, preaching perverse things, to draw away Disciples after them*. In the second of the *Thessalonians*, he fore- 2 Thessal. tells of a falling away, and of the revealing of the man of sinne that 2. 3. exalteth himself above all that is called God, or worshipped; whose coming he shews to be after the working of Satan, with all power, and signes, and lying wonders, and with all deceiveablenesse of unrighteousnesse. Again in the first of *Timothy*, he foretells a depar- 1 Tim 3 2 ting of some from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and that speak lies in hypocrisie, forbidding marriage, and meats. In the second of *Timothy*, he declares that in the last dayes, *perilous times* 2 Tim 3. 2, shall come, the perilousnesse of which he shews to be in this, That men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, trouble-breakers, false-accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of the good, traiterous, heady, high minded, &c. having a form of godlinesse, but denying the power thereof, &c. Of which sort are they that creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, laden with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. And lastly, That the time would come, when they would not endure sound Doctrine, but after their own lusts, beapt to themselves Teachers.

Saint Peter forewarneth also of false Teachers, shewing that 2 Pet. 2. 10. they should privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them; and an especiall description of whom, he maketh

in this, that they despise Government, are presumptuous, self-willed, and not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

1 Ioh. 2.19 Saint John tells us, That as we have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now there are many Antichrists. And then he deciphereth by their inconstancy, and disobedience. They went out from us (saith he) but are not of us, for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.

Ep. Jude  
4.

Lastly, Saint Jude in his generall Epistle, warneth the universal Church of men of like singularities, noted by this, that they creep in unawares, that they despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities, that they speak evil of those things they understand not, that they go the wayes of Cain, and runne greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perish in the gainsaying of Core, (as much as to say, men of unbrotherlike affections, seekers of their own gain, and disobedient to their Superiours;) further, that they are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts, speaking swelling words, having mens persons in admiration for advantage; And lastly, That they be they that separate themselves.

What have we in this, but an entire description of the whole practice of the spirit of error, and of adersion to Christianity, which the Scripture calleth *Antichrists*. By which, sinne (that through the light of the Gospel was subdued, and deprived of his first and naturall Empire, consisting in the viciousnesse of corrupt nature) turning himself unto his Artes, like the divell into an Angel of light, does now with refined and mysterious falsities, (such as resemble Piety, and true Religion) renew his onsets in a warfare of a more dangerous consequence; so various and (in appearance) so contrary often to sinne, as puts the strongest Christian to the use of all his *Armour of righteousness*, as well on the right hand, as on the left, to be able to withstand him.

2 Thes. 2.  
3, and 8.

This Antichristianisme is here represented to us in a twofold form. The first an Empire of mysterious sinne; A body of members well united together under one head, or Sovereigne, set forth one while by the names of the *Man of sinne*, *The sonne of perdition*, *The wicked one*; Another while by the name of *Babylon the great*, *The mother of fornications*, *The great whore*, &c. The description

of

of which Empire is in such Characters, as marvellously sheweth with the Roman Papacy.

The other form of mysterious wickednesse is, of a quite contrary nature. A loose Anarchy of singulars, of men by themselves, not united together in one by any common Bond of true Communion; but (like quicksands cast together, by the working of the Sea, and from time to time shifted and changed with it) so they, as judgements, private ends, or affections do concur, are brought accidentally to a concurrence among themselves, but without any ground, or solid principle of uniting. For though they seem to put on the Yoke of *Christ*, yet every one keeps the Bonds of the yoke in his own hands, and is the Sovereign Arbitrer of his own obedience. Notwithstanding which contrariety of theirs to the Roman Church (who abuses obedience as these do liberty) they are no other then derivatives of the same spirit of error, begot by way of opposition, on her that is *the mother of fornications*. Who having against the manifest Word of God usurped a tyrannicall sovereignty both over Gods Word, his Church, and all the Princes of his Church, and being bearen from it, the divell instead of quitting the rule, that he held by her Monarchall tyranny, changes only his vicerent, and continues the same usurpation in a popular, and Anarchall way; that is, by the hands of every particular man, or number of men, who (abusing the example of rejection of her usurped authority) shall invade and reject all authority how lawfully soever established in the Church. Both are opposers of *Christ*s Doctrine, both usurpers of the authority of his Church; both hiding their usurpation under a form of godlinesse; they differ but in this, Men in the one, partake only of the iniquity by influence from the head; but in the other, every distinct member, is the originall Author of it to himself.

We finding then such an alarme in the Scripture blown against perverse, and self-led professors of Religion, set forth unto us by such Characters, as *Wolves*, *Foll-wers of Cain*, *Balaam*, and *Corah*, 1 Pet. 2. 15; *curst children*, and the like; Notwithstanding that they have *sheeps* Ep. Jude. *cloathing*, *forms of godlinesse*, and *fained words* to cover them. It remains, that we strictly examine what fruits, or works, have passed our hands, which in their common and naturall acceptation

are evil, though brought forth for good ends, and that we utterly relinquish them, that we take heed of wayes of singularity, that lead to false accusation, trayterousnesse, beadyneſſe, high-mindedneſſe, and denying of the power of godlineſſe; That we take heed of the doctrines of thoſe that draw diſciples after them; That creep into houſes, That go out from the fellowſhip of the Apoſtles, and continue not with them, That follow the wayes of Cains uncharitableneſſe, of Baalaams prophesyng for lucre, or of Corahs diſobedience; That we take heed of thoſe that deſpiſe Government, Are preſumptuous, ſelf-willed, not afraid to ſpeak evil of dignities, that deſpiſe dominion, have menſpersous in admiration becauſe of advantage, That heape to themſelves Teachers, That ſeparate themſelves. And laſtly, That while we juſtly hate Popery, we do not in any thing partake of that ſinne of the Popes which made him that hatefull Apoſtate, and myſticall enemy of the Church, namely, That we do not, by aſſuming into a wrong hand any power or authority which God hath by his Word committed to the Body of the Paſtors of his Church onely, rob him of his rightfull Jurisdiction, as they that have invaded his Tythes and Offerings, robbed him of his rightfull Poſſeſſions.

Mal. 3. 2.



FINIS.

